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IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Cancelled, without prejudice)

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 A method of producing reagent coated substrate comprising:

coating a substrate with reagent in solution, and

exposing said solution to radiant energy provided by at least one radiant energy heater,

wherein airflow sufficient only to break a vapor barrier of the solution is directed at said solution while exposed to said radiant energy.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 A method of producing reagent coated substrate comprising:

coating a substrate with reagent in solution, and

exposing said solution to radiant energy provided by at least one radiant energy heater,

wherein said substrate is provided in a roll, and ~~is fed~~ the method further comprises feeding said roll past said radiant energy source.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 2, 3 or 6, wherein said reagent is provided in at least one stripe.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 2, 3 or 6, wherein said substrate includes a reflective surface.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5 A method of producing reagent coated substrate comprising:

coating a substrate with reagent in solution, and

exposing said solution to radiant energy provided by at least one radiant energy heater,

wherein said substrate is provided in a roll, and ~~is fed~~ the method further comprises feeding said roll past said radiant energy source, wherein said feeding of said substrate is performed at a rate between about 5 and 50 feet per minute.

7. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said radiant energy is infrared energy delivered at an intensity of at least 3.5 W/in².

8. (Currently Amended) A reagent coated substrate made by the process of claim + 2, 3 or 6, whereby a dried reagent coating having a substantially uniform thickness is produced.

9. (Original) The reagent coated substrate of claim 8, wherein said substrate comprises an inert backing material and a metallic coating.

10. (Original) The reagent coated substrate of claim 8, in a test strip precursor.

11. (Original) The reagent coated substrate of claim 8, in a reagent test strip.

12. (Original) The reagent coated substrate of claim 8, in an electrochemical-type test strip.

13. (Original) The reagent coated substrate of claim 8, in an electrochemical-type test strip comprising a pair of electrodes and a spacer therebetween defining a reaction zone.

14. (Original) The reagent coated substrate of claim 8, in a reagent test strip wherein said reagent test strip can be read by a hand held meter.

15. (Original) A system for use in determining the concentration of an analyte in a physiological sample, comprising:

a reagent test strip comprising a substrate as described in claim 8 in combination with a hand-held meter, wherein said reagent test strip and said meter are adapted to interface with one another.

16. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein said reagent test strip is received by said meter.

17. (Original) A kit for use in determining the concentration of an analyte in a physiological sample, comprising:

a reagent test strip comprising substrate as described in claim 8 in packaged combination with at least one of a set of directions for test strip use, a means for obtaining a physiological sample, and an analyte standard.

18. (Original) A method for determining the concentration of an analyte in a sample, said method comprising:

applying a fluid sample to a reagent test strip comprising a reagent coated substrate as described in claim 8;

detecting a signal from said reagent test strip; and

relating said detected signal to the concentration of analyte in said sample to determine the concentration of said analyte in said fluid sample.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein said fluid sample is a biological sample.

20. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein said analyte is glucose.

21. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein said detecting and relating steps are performed by a hand held meter.